

Vision 21 Implementation Committee

Meeting Notes

February 16, 2006

Accepted March 2, 2006

Members Present: Donna Brescia, Meg O'Brien, Jennifer Page, Paul Santos,
Members Absent: Austin Bliss, Vincent D'Novellis, Victoria Haase, Sara Oaklander, Ann Rittenburg, Jay Szklut, Paul Solomon
Guests: Three Conservation Commissioners: Peg Velie, Martha Moore, Nancy Davis. (The ConCom is an appointed commission, consisting of 7 members and 3 associate members.)

We convened at 7:00 p.m. We lacked a quorum. The entire meeting was devoted to discussion of a proposed new Wetlands By-law, developed by a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission. Peg Velie reviewed a map of Belmont, showing where wetlands (various descriptors) exist in Town; Nancy and Martha explained the proposed language. The group came to the Vision 21 Implementation Committee to present the bylaw, discuss the content and issues, and receive assistance and feedback on their presentation approach. Had there been a quorum, they would also have hoped to gain our "support" of the by-law, but this was not considered. They will be presenting the proposed bylaw to other community groups and the Town Meeting Members. The group anticipates that it will come before Town Meeting in April.

The bylaw will change the descriptors of land areas near bodies of water. Areas now described as "buffer zones" will be identified as "resource areas". This change increases the protected land around smaller bodies of water currently described as buffer zones from the current 100 feet to an expanded 200 feet.

The group's reasons for proposing the bylaw are:

- 1) to address pollution, (two of the largest ponds are now impaired by pollution – from sources originating within the Town).
- 2) More protected land would decrease flooding.
- 3) Wetlands are currently threatened by property development; the new areas in this bylaw are not protected by the current Wetlands Protection Act.

This bylaw would be enacted through use of the Home Rule process, which includes: 1) Town Meeting, 2) Attorney General 3) Legislature

While there are current protections under the State's Rivers Protection Act and the Wetlands Act, there have been so many cutbacks in the DEP, they are not able to review and enforce regulations. Therefore, the Conservation Commission believes that Belmont must institute, monitor and implement it's own regulation.

Vision Committee members offered a variety of suggestions to the Commission members regarding their presentation, for which the members appeared grateful.

Notes submitted by:
Donna Brescia

Secretary Pro Tempore